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1 7. (Amended) A method of seeking admission to a computer network, comprising:  
2 determining, at a first network device which is not a current component of the computer  
3 network, whether a communication channel used for communicatively coupling two or more  
4 current components of the computer network is actively being utilized by the current components  
5 of the computer network; and  
6 transmitting, from the first network device, a message within the communication channel at  
7 a time depending upon whether the communication channel is actively being utilized or not.

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12. (Amended) A method, comprising:  
2 listening, at a network controller, for a connection request message transmitted by a first  
3 component, which is not a current component of a computer network in which the network  
4 controller operates, seeking access to a communication channel communicatively coupling one or  
5 more current network components to the network controller; and  
6 upon receipt of the connection request message, negotiating bandwidth requirements  
7 within the communication channel with the first component.

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1 16. (Amended) A method, comprising accessing at a device not currently associated with a  
2 computer network a communication channel communicatively coupling components of [a] the  
3 computer network by first acting as a communication master to request access to the  
4 communication channel and subsequently acting as a communication slave once the request for  
5 access to the communication channel has been recognized.

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1 20. (Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the terms comprise an indication of time slots  
2 within the communication channel during which the [first component] device may expect to  
3 receive information from the network controller and during which the [first component] device  
4 may transmit information to the network controller.

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1 27. (Amended) A method of providing access to a computer network, comprising: